

To: The Government's Reform Committee's Subcommittee on Criminal Justice,
Drug Policy and Human Resources

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Subject: "Appalachian Ice: The Methamphetamine Epidemic in Western North
Carolina"

The State of North Carolina has seen the abuse of Methamphetamine rise dramatically during the past five years. The number of Methamphetamine laboratories, chemical and glassware seizures and related dump sites have nearly doubled every year from a total of thirty-four in 2001 to three hundred twenty-two in 2004. Through the hard work of the North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper, the N. C. Department of Justice, State Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration and numerous local law enforcement agencies, we have begun to see a decrease in the number of laboratory seizures across the state.

The enhancement of Methamphetamine manufacturing laws and restrictions on the sale of Pseudoephedrine have been instrumental in bringing about this decline. The trafficking of Methamphetamine by Mexican National Drug Organizations still remains a significant problem and trends suggest that it will only increase in an effort to fill the demand for Methamphetamine that is no longer being produced domestically.

The N. C. Department of Justice, in conjunction with the State Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Administration, are formulating a Methamphetamine Trafficking Task Force that will seek to combat the flood of Methamphetamine into Western North Carolina. This task force will be modeled after the highly successful South/Eastern Tennessee Methamphetamine Task Force which has received Federal funding for its operation.

The task force seeks to organize local, state and federal law enforcement efforts in Methamphetamine trafficking investigations to maximize productivity and the utilization of funding. This task force would provide overtime funding to local law enforcement agencies, training for law enforcement officers, public education programs and drug intelligence dissemination throughout the state. Efforts would also be coordinated in the area of enforcing Pseudoephedrine laws to ensure the continued decline of Methamphetamine laboratories. Federal funding of this task force would provide the financial foundation to ensure its success in slowing the flow of Methamphetamine into North Carolina.